

Outstanding Personal Contribution Entry - Najla Almutairi, Station Assistant for Southern Railway

Who is Najla Almutairi, Station Assistant, London Victoria?



[Click on pictures above to download](#)

Najla Almutairi, 27, is a Station Assistant for Southern Railway based at London Victoria.

Having arrived in the UK from Saudi Arabia aged 16 with her mum, Najla secured a degree in architecture, but during her studies her mother fell seriously ill. After graduating, Najla spent a year and a half in part-time work while caring for her mum and younger siblings but sought a better position to support her family. It was a daunting time as Najla didn't know where to start looking for a career, and had no CV.

Eventually, she found The Prince's Trust, the young people's charity, which provided careers guidance and helped her secure a place on the *Get Into Railways* programme, run in partnership with Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR).

Following a work placement, she landed a job as a Station Assistant with Southern Railway, operated by GTR, and is now also giving back by acting as a Young Ambassador for the Prince's Trust. Najla said: "I enjoy every day working on the railway. I love being part of our team and assisting passengers. My ambition is to progress into a management role and to develop leadership qualities to enable me to inspire and support more young people."

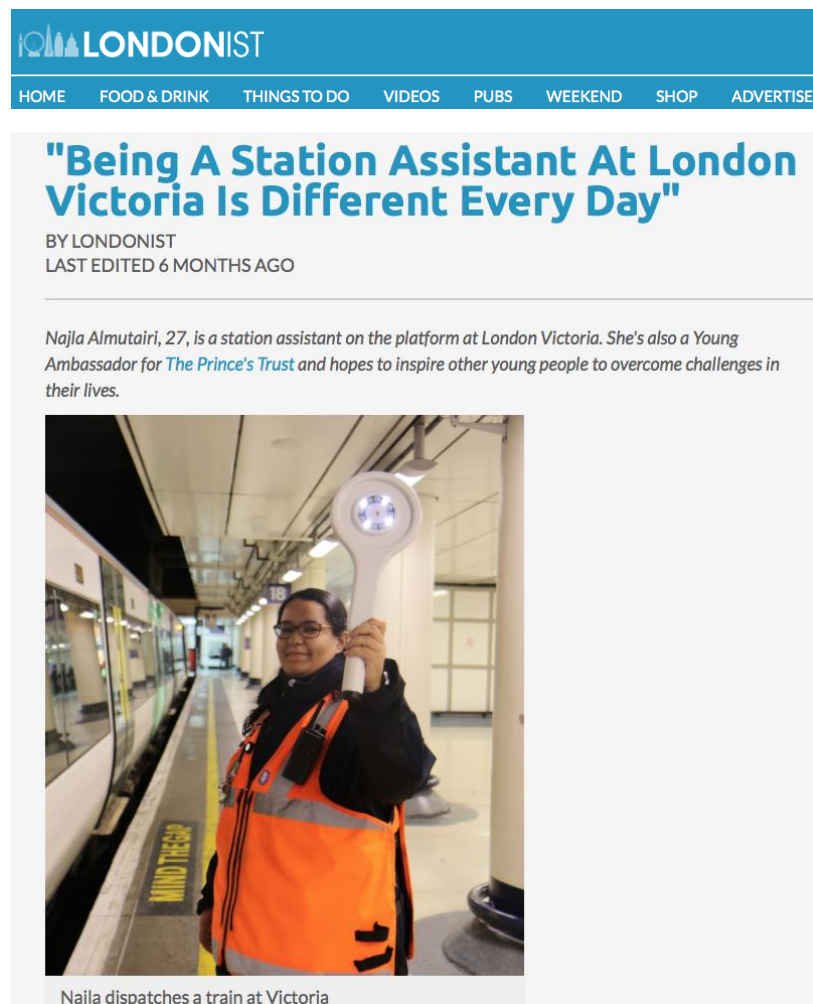
Najla, the difference maker

Najla has been a great representative for GTR, highlighting the positive impact of the *Get into Railways* programme. Najla's openness to sharing her story with journalists, MPs and other stakeholders has made communicating GTR's partnership with Prince's Trust all the more impactful. Her very humble and positive manner when sharing her story with colleagues and external

audiences allows listeners to understand the positive emotional impact that the programme has on participants.

Najla's support in sharing her experiences about the programme at company strategy days has helped inspire more GTR employees from across the business want to be involved and volunteer to support the programme. In doing so, GTR is seeing a rising number of women looking for careers within an increasingly diverse workforce, and a dramatic increase in the number of apprentices it is taking on - thanks, in significant part, to Najla's achievements.

Example of media coverage – Londonist, October 2019 (demonstrating the passion Najla has for inspiring others):



Colleague testimonial:

- **Emmanuel Akinfenwa, Safety Risk specialist** – “I was privileged to train Najla when she first came to the company as a train dispatcher. We had two weeks of training and in those two weeks, I can safely say that she was an absolutely fantastic personality to have around, who is willing to help everyone she comes into contact with.

“She comes up with the most brilliant ideas to assist customers (such as developing the relatively new On-board Supervisor role to offer more accessibility support) and immediately makes them feel comfortable with her infectious smile. Following on from training, although

I haven't had the opportunity to see her on the front line, I have heard amazing stories about the work she does on the platform and how lucky we are to have her in the company."

Passenger testimonials:

- **Paul Casey, regular commuter, posted on the Southern Railway LinkedIn page** – "Najla is a fantastic lady and a valuable member of the Southern Railway group staff. As a regular commuter and a wheelchair user, it is through the assistance of Najla and her colleagues that I am able to access rail travel the same as anyone else. Najla, you are a star. I wish you every success!"



Paul Casey •3rd+

Energy Officer at Westminster City Council | Member of the ABLE Ne... 5mo ...

Najla is a fantastic lady and a valuable member of the Southern Railway group staff. As a regular commuter and a wheelchair user, it is through the assistance of Najla and her colleagues, that I am able to access rail travel the same as anyone else. Najla, you are a star. I wish you every success!



• 8 Likes



• 1 Reply

- Najla has also this year received a Marks & Spencer's gift card from a passenger who works for Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea after she helped him find personal belongings he'd lost on a train and as a thank you for 'going above and beyond' he kindly gave her the gift card later as a token of his gratitude.
- Furthermore, Najla recently helped an elderly person board a train and received £1 for tea! "It's the smallest things that make the biggest difference," she says.
- When another passenger lost something on a train, Najla went above and beyond to locate which train the passenger was on, and contacted the On-Board Supervisor (OBS) for that train and helped the customer retrieve her lost item. The customer was delighted.

Najla, the new expectation

Najla has created a legacy that will last at GTR, and will continue to do so for all her time with us. We already know to expect great things from our brilliant staff but Najla has truly set the bar as high as it has ever been - not just by her efforts in the station, but by going above and beyond to better the experiences of colleagues and passengers alike.

It is really incredible that someone like Najla can experience such adversity, yet come out the other side with the positive energy to go and inspire the next generation, no matter their circumstance.

Examples of Najla going beyond the job description:

- When discussing youth skills and learning opportunities in the railway sector, Najla plays an active role not only for GTR, but with the rail industry as a whole. She recently contributed to a meeting with leaders from across the railway, deliberating on what more the industry

can do to maintain its supply of skilled labour and ensure that opportunities are there for young people to see the value in a career in rail. **See below media coverage.**

Example of media coverage – Recruiter.co.uk, September 2019 (demonstrating the impact Najla has had on the “Get Into Railways’ programme with Prince’s Trust):



News / / / Govia Thameslink and The Prince's Trust extend joint training programme

GOVIA THAMESLINK AND THE PRINCE'S TRUST EXTEND JOINT TRAINING PROGRAMME

| 23 September 2019



UK rail operator Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) and young people's charity The Prince's Trust have extended a joint training programme by a further two years.

The joint 'Get Into Railways' training programme has been extended a further two years and is committed to train at least 70 more young people.

The programme, funded by GTR and delivered in conjunction with The Prince's Trust, has so far helped 182 18-25-year-olds gain skills and work experience since the start of the partnership in 2014, generating around £1.6m of social benefit to UK society over the past five years.

- She has also been involved in formal events with GTR's CEO, Patrick Verwer, to influence and support equality, diversity and opportunities for young people. Beyond this, Najla has attended Labour Party conferences and railway roundtable events, again supporting the flow of talent into the industry, benefiting workers and passengers alike.
- As a GTR **Accessibility Champion**, Najla is always trying to find new ways to improve accessibility for all our customers. Where she notices issues or potential challenges for passengers, she'll raise feedback with management and begin a collaborative approach for a solution.

- Najla recently pitched a new idea to management, which is now being discussed with the on-board management team. Her idea is that since all OBS do not have to perform the safety critical task of closing the train doors, they could play a more vital role in improving accessibility and services to passengers who depend on them to use the railway. Najla advised that the OBS should have a more proactive role in facilitating passengers who require assistance, being present in the same carriage as the passenger to assist regardless of the situation. Too often, she noted, across the industry, do passengers requiring assistance ‘fall through the gaps’ when unexpected changes occur to the service (for example, the unavailability of station staff).

Najla, The Prince’s Trust Ambassador

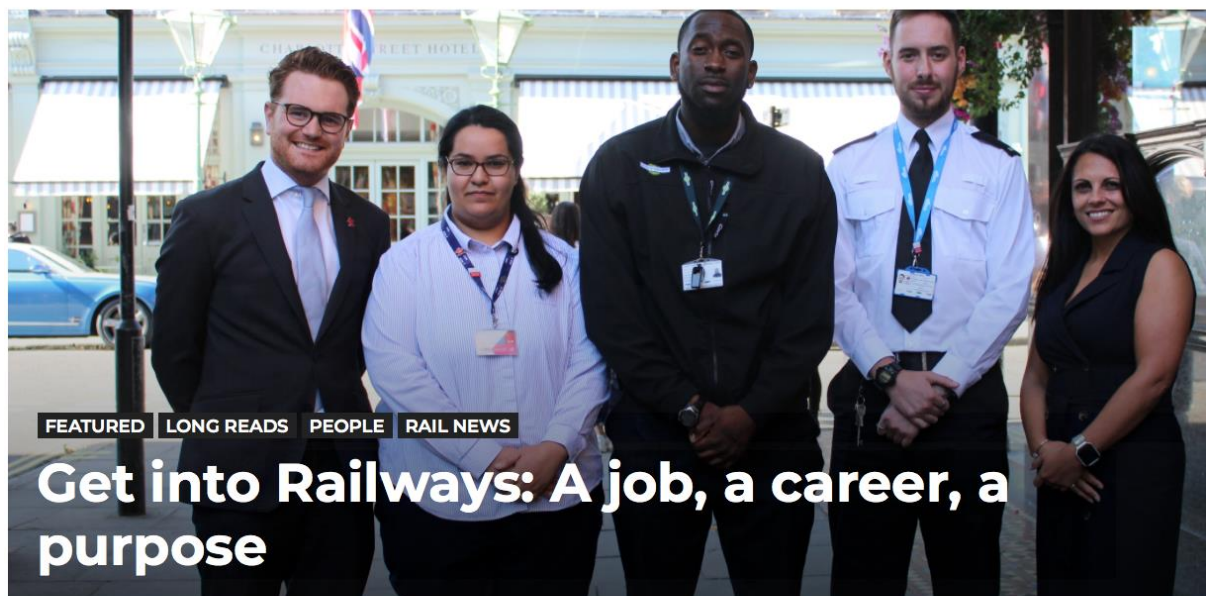
The role of ‘Prince’s Trust Young Ambassador’ is described by the Trust as being reserved for, "Its most inspirational young people."

Najla took the opportunity to be an Ambassador because she passionately believes every young person facing adversity should not go through it alone and should receive appropriate help. Najla knows this is a critical point in young people’s lives that can change their futures, and hopes her own experiences can inspire future generations. And they certainly do! **See media coverage below.**

Example of media coverage – Rail Staff, October 2019 (demonstrating the impact Najla has had on the “Get Into Railways’ programme with Prince’s Trust):



Home > Long Reads > Get into Railways: A job, a career, a purpose



21ST OCTOBER 2019

GTR and The Prince’s Trust have helped 182 youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds gain work experience through their ‘Get into Railway’ programme. As the partnership celebrates its fifth anniversary, Stewart Thorpe discovers its impact on some of those lives and society

She wishes that during her time as a Young Ambassador, she will take the opportunity to “pursue change and inspire other young people through public speaking and engagement at major events in the UK and globally.”

As part of her Ambassador role, she’s been involved in many events, the most recent being *Invest in Futures* hosted by HRH The Prince of Wales, which raised £900,000 for the Trust on the night. Najla’s role was to network with supporters, make connections and emphasise the incredible work the Prince’s Trust does.

Najla regards her proudest achievement as an Ambassador to have been a meeting with Accor Hotels, owner of the Savoy among others. Three hotels and brands agreed to engage with the Trust and run employability courses, with plans to raise £75,000 to £100,000 for the charity.



[Click on picture above to download](#)

Third-Party Testimonial:

Robin Browne, Young Ambassadors Executive at The Prince’s Trust - “Young Ambassadors are The Prince’s Trust’s storytellers, sharing how their confidence and careers grew on a journey which included the Prince’s Trust. Often, and certainly in Najla’s case, they’re brave enough to share some of the challenging context which brought them to The Trust in the first place, making their successful outcomes even more impressive. These amazing stories help us engage significant amounts of support for our charity, whether that’s simply raising awareness, encouraging volunteering, bringing more young people on to our courses or inspiring funding from small gifts to considerable investments.

“Najla is indescribably wonderful in this role. I know that whenever we offer her an event or engagement, the only things that would stop her taking it on with extreme enthusiasm would be her commitment to her job and family. She has attended basically everything we’ve asked her to do, always with a huge smile and winning hearts and minds. I am extremely, extremely proud of Najla and I am so delighted she’s being considered for recognition. She richly deserves it.”